

Occurrence of blue tile fish *Malacanthus latovittatus* (Lacepede, 1801) (Actinopterygii: Malacanthidae) in Tuticorin Coast

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A specimen of *Malacanthus latovittatus* (Fig. 1) with standard length 330 mm and weighing 250 g was collected from the bycatch of a commercial trawler at Tuticorin fishing harbour during March 2010. The specimen was caught approximately 30 km east off Tuticorin, Gulf of Mannar at a depth ranging from 20 to 25 m. After detailed morphological examination, the specimen was photographed and fixed with 5% formalin. The morphometric measurements were taken to the nearest mm and the specimen was identified as *M. latovittatus* described in FAO (1984).



Fig. 1. *Malacanthus latovittatus* (Lacepede, 1801)

The family Malacanthidae has 5 genera and about 46 species distributed in tropical and temperate seas. The genus *Malacanthus* comprises of three valid species, *M. brevirostris* Guichenot, 1848, *M. latovittatus* (Lacepede, 1801) and *M. plumieri* (Bloch, 1786). *M. latovittatus* has elongated and compressed body, dorsal and ventral profile evenly tapering to caudal, mouth broad with fleshy lips, jaws equal, termination of upper jaw far distant from eye. Cycloid scales on opercles and nape, square on superior part of trunk. Operculum is with a strong flat spine and five branchiostegals. Teeth in jaws are canine; vomer and palatines toothless.

Dorsal fin rays III, 44; Anal I, 39; Pectoral 15 and pelvic fin with 5 rays. The gill rakers 9; caudal fin truncate and its upper lobe are elongate and lateral-line scales 124.

Colour: Head blue, iris yellow; body olive-grey to violet-blue above, bluish white on belly; a broad dark band runs from opercle to tip of caudal fin, widening on tail to include most of middle and lower portion; lower portion of fin with a small white rectangular area; dorsal fin grey-brown with a pale band along upper margin; anal and pelvic fins white; pectoral fins bluish.

Table 1 Morphometric measurements of *Malacanthus latovittatus* (Lacepede, 1801)

Morphometric characters	Measurements (mm)
Total length	400
Standard length	330
Head length	95
Body depth	90
Snout length	50
Post orbital length	40
Lower jaw length	28
Upper jaw length	32
Dorsal fin length	28
Dorsal fin base length	230
Predorsal fin length	110
Pectoral fin length	58
Pectoral fin base length	20
Prepelvic fin length	100
Pelvic fin length	27
Pelvic fin base length	07
Preanal length	160
Anal fin length	25
Anal fin base length	163